

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: [REDACTED] Acting Legislative Counsel

SUBJECT: Relations with the General Accounting  
Office and Response to their Draft  
Report, "Defense Reconnaissance  
Intelligence Assets"

1. ( ) Action Requested: GAO has submitted a draft report on Department of Defense Reconnaissance/Intelligence assets and requests your comments on the substance of the report. They have already released this report in draft form to the intelligence oversight committees of the House and Senate, to the Appropriation Committee of the House and to the Senate Armed Services Committee. This report states that GAO was hampered in their work by the refusal of you and the Secretary of Defense to grant certain clearances to GAO. This raises a second issue, the general matter of relations with GAO on sensitive information. Recommendations on these matters are contained in paragraph 4.

2. ( ) Background: On 19 July 1977, [REDACTED] Acting Director of the National Reconnaissance Office notified us that GAO was undertaking two surveys which involved the National Reconnaissance Program and that GAO was seeking twelve to twenty-four [REDACTED] clearances. Cook recommended providing only four [REDACTED] clearances. The studies were identified as follows:

[REDACTED]

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Dear Mr. Staats:

This is in response to requests from Mr. J. K. Fosick and Mr. J. H. Stolarow of the General Accounting Office for my comments on a General Accounting Office draft report titled "Defense Reconnaissance/Intelligence Assets." I am writing to you directly on this matter because I wish to address not only the report in question, but also the larger matter of General Accounting Office relationships to the more sensitive aspects of the Intelligence Community.

The report in question clearly deals with a major policy aspect of the National Foreign Intelligence Program, namely the interface or the interworking of this program with the tactical requirements of the military services. The writers of the report admit that their efforts to study this matter were not entirely successful because they did not have access to certain sensitive intelligence information. I think nothing further need be said about the substance of this particular report. If the issues raised in the report are of interest to the Congressional Committees concerned with intelligence oversight, I will be happy to communicate with them directly about their interests.

But the report and your current request for compartmented clearances do raise a broader matter of interest between us, namely, what should be the continuing policy regarding GAO access to sensitive intelligence information. I believe it would benefit us both to have a firm policy regarding such access. And since I am charged by law with the protection of intelligence sources and methods, I shall take the lead in proposing such a policy.

First, I propose to continue to offer full cooperation to your organization with respect to requests for background intelligence of a non-sensitive nature. Second, I propose to offer full cooperation on any requests for sensitive intelligence information needed in specific studies which have been formally and specifically authorized by any Congressional Committee charged with responsibility for oversight of national foreign

intelligence. Third, I propose to deny access to sensitive information not so authorized. Naturally I will expect your organization to conform to my security clearance procedures for personnel, and to my security handling procedures for the storage and dissemination of sensitive intelligence information. For all other matters of common concern I would like to continue using Frank Conahan, Associate Director of your International Division, and my Office of Legislative Counsel as permanent points of contact to review requests on a case by case basis.

I believe that these arrangements will provide a degree of consistency needed to regularize and improve your dealings with the Intelligence Community. It will, at the same time, provide me with some guidelines for granting GAO access to sensitive information when such is necessary. I would welcome your thoughts on this matter, as I am anxious to move toward a procedure which helps both of us carry out our responsibilities.

Yours sincerely,

STANSFIELD TURNER

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ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

FROM:

Office of Legislative Counsel

EXTENSION

NO.

DATE

28 February 1978

STAT

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

OFFICER'S INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

RECEIVED

FORWARDED

1. DDA

1 MAR 1978

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Would appreciate your quick review and comments on the attached proposed policy letter to the Comptroller General.

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